

Killed in Iowa, Hanged in West

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have ordered an infantry maneuver. That would have saved hundreds of brave boys."

Cutting later served in the British army in Indian mutinies, in the Lucknow siege in Egypt and in South Africa. The only wound he received was a bayonet thrust in one foot.

Coming to America, he became a fireman on what is now the Rock Island, was promoted to engineer six months later and served until pensioned in 1910.

Forty years ago, he was thrown 60 feet by a rotary snow plow, and sustained several broken bones. Aside from that, he has never been hurt in railroading.

"Foin Tim" Cutting, the railroaders call him all over the Rock Island system. He reads newspapers without his glasses, and he walks two miles or more every time he goes downtown from his home.

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Early Days Near Royal

KILLED IN IOWA, HANGED IN WEST

by Don Buchan

Royal—Like all towns Royal has had it's (sic) tragedy...

Billy the Kid, they say, killed 21 men before he was 21 years old. Happy Herman, alias Charlie Craig, who came here from Alton, Ill., killed his first man at the age of 15, and while only one other murder was actually laid at his door, he may have come closer to Billy's record than the known facts disclose.

It was in March, 1917, when such words as Kaiser, Hun, flapper, and faming youth were on everyone's lips. Mr. and Mrs. Harry Peterson, newly married, lived on a farm near Royal and had just purchased a new Ford automobile.

As Mrs. Peterson busied herself in the kitchen, likely thinking that spring would soon come and the mountains of ice and snow would melt away and they could visit neighbors in their new Ford, she heard the dull boom of a shotgun. Perhaps she thought Harry or the hired man, Happy Herman,

had killed a barn rat or a chicken hawk.

A hoarse voice at the door shocked her out of her reverie. "C'mon out into the vestibule," it rasped. Mrs. Peterson scarcely recognized it as the voice of Happy Herman, the hired man who helped with the chores in exchange for board and room, a not uncommon arrangement in 1917.

"C'mon out or I'll shoot you, too."

Mrs. Peterson froze for a moment horrified at the sight of young Herman's twisted features and bared teeth. Then she fled, blood pounding in her ears. Through the dining room she ran, terror lending speed to her flying feet.

Thank God there was a lock on the bedroom door. But it would never hold if young Herman threw the weight of his muscular body against it.

In panic she turned to the window and flung it open. With a sob she clambered through it and raced toward the road. Gravel crunched beneath her feet and slush and mud covered her shoes and stockings. She prayed she would not twist her ankle on the frozen lumps.

As she ran she glanced over her shoulder and saw young Herman in the yard with the shotgun cradled against his shoulder.

She heard the retort and felt the pellets sting her neck, thigh, and leg.

The warm blood coursed down her body and splattered on the dirty snow as she chanced another backward glance. There was Harry's new Ford, pulling out of the driveway onto the road. The hired man was at the wheel. But where, oh where was Harry?

As the terrified, bleeding woman reached the Gustafson farm about 70 rods distant, Adolph Gustafson and Dean Pyle were in the yard.

"Young Herman shot me," she gasped. "I think he shot Harry, too. Please go see if Harry is all right. That Happy Herman has gone. I saw him driving the Ford down the road."

Gustafson and Pyle hurried to the Peterson farm. "Harry . . .!" they shouted, but there was no answer.

When they were joined by Mrs. Gustafson and Mrs.

Peterson they saw a smear of blood on the outside of a manger in the calfbarn. Inside the manger, covered with hay was the body of Harry Peterson, his head mangled by the blast of a shotgun at close range.

Word spread rapidly and two carloads of vigilantes started a search. Art Hjelm drove one; O. B. Scott another. With them, were Chris Johnson, Zeb Santage, J. O. Johnson, Frank Miller, Howard Doss, and Dean Pyle. Accounts vary, and perhaps J. A. Heng captained another carload.

In Cornell they asked a filling station operator if he had seen a young man in a new Ford. "No," was the answer. "But a young fellow was just here and bought a quart of oil. Said his car was stalled two miles down the road."

The vigilantes roared down the Air Line highway until they saw two men walking. "That's Vern Sarvold," one said. "He drives the bus for the Cornell school."

When they came abreast of the two men, one of the vigilantes asked, "Have you seen a young fellow in a new Ford?"

"No! No!" answered the younger man quickly. Too quickly. Chris Johnson thought. Chris leaped from the car and pinned the young man's arms.

Mr. Johnson recalled it. "I stood on the running board and jumped and caught him by the throat. I was a pretty fair country wrestler and so was Doss, who was with us. We had both worked out with Parcaut. But that kid was as hard to hold as a greased shoat. He hit and kicked and even bit us. I got in some hard pokes with my left hand—and I'm left handed. We were splattered with blood and so was the back seat of the car when we got him inside. He said he killed Peterson to get the car but we knew he had a different motive. . ."

Sheriff Lidman and Deputy Frank Smith drove up and handcuffed the man. "The first handcuffs I'd ever seen," Chris recalls.

In Spencer the young slayer was taken before Mayor Eugene Bender. "I've used the name Happy Herman and claimed I was 18 years old," he said coolly, "but I'm really only 15 and my name is Charlie Craig."

Craig spoke of the killing without a sign of remorse. "I planned to do it yesterday," he said, "then changed my mind."

"But I had cut the telephone wires and I knew Harry would be mad about that, anyway so I laid in wait in the haymow. When he came to feed the calves he climbed the ladder. Just as his head came level with the haymow floor I pulled the trigger."

Craig said his father, a blacksmith in Alton, Illinois, was a heavy drinker and he had been in trouble there for trying to rob a woman clerk in a coal office.

A telegram was sent to his parents. Meanwhile Craig gave a statement, "I am 5 feet 5½ inches tall. Born in Anada, Mo., I killed Harry Peterson about 7 o'clock on the morning of March 29."

Sheriff Lidman, wise in the ways of an angry crowd, took Craig to Emmetsburg for safe keeping. "There's no danger," the veteran officer said, "But the local jail isn't sanitary and folks might be looking in the windows, disturbing the neighbors."

When Lidman brought the young man back on Tuesday, he had the train stop at the water tower where a waiting car brought him and the prisoner to the court house where Craig's mother was waiting.

Young Craig and his mother embraced. "He was a good boy," the broken hearted mother said. "I made him go to Sunday School. His only fault was smoking cigarettes on the sly."

Judge Nils Lee accepted Craig's plea of guilty and sentenced him to life imprisonment.

Mrs. Craig accompanied the sheriff and her son to Fort Madison. During a stop over in Cedar Rapids, a man, seeing the handcuffed youth, said, "There's a fellow who got what was coming to him." Mrs. Craig, enraged, threatened the speaker with her umbrella.

Craig was a model prisoner and without the warden's approval, a deputy warden assigned him to work outside the prison walls. After 5 years, 3 months, and 8 days, Craig sneaked away.

Many folks in Royal slept with guns near at hand, but Chris Johnson refused to go armed, even though Craig had threatened him at the time of sentencing.

"Sheriff Lidman offered to give me a permit," Chris recalls. "But I was working on the road with a team and scraper, so I had my hands full. What good would a gun have done me?"

In 1924 a man giving the name Fred Johnson was arrested in California with a 19 year old companion named Earl Williams. They were accused of bank robbery and murder.

Fred Johnson confessed to district attorney Fred C. Pugh that he was the wanted Charlie Craig. He told how they had robbed the bank at Red Bluff in Tehama county and later shot and killed Ranger Sam Hermanson who attempted to apprehend them when they missed the Los Molinos road and got on a minor highway.

"I know I'm gone," Craig said. "I've got to swing, but I'd like to save the kid." He then attempted to take the full blame. He also confessed he had twice robbed the North Sacramento branch of the California National bank.

He and his 19 year old companion had only a Canadian nickel between them when they robbed the Red Bluff bank, although authorities said that Craig had no doubt been responsible for many robberies in California.

Craig wore a diamond-studded wrist watch and asked that it be given to his wife who, with two children, was living in Oakland.

Once again his broken-hearted mother came and embraced him before he was led away to be hanged in San Quentin prison. This time Craig broke down and wept.

For his mother it would not be the last time.

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